



## **Loving Where You Live: Loving Your Neighbor with No Strings Attached**

Love is a choice. It doesn't just happen. It is not just a "second-hand emotion". It wasn't an emotion that sent Jesus to die on the cross, it was an act of the Father's will. We see this love in such a practical way through the book of Leviticus. The Israelites had been delivered from Egypt, but they were still trying to understand how God wanted them to live. In a loving response to this, God gave them the law. He showed them through the law that He would atone for sin through the shedding of blood. Here are 8 practical points to loving your neighbor from Leviticus 19:9-18:

1. **GIVE TO THOSE IN NEED** (v9) - Gleaning means "to gather up the leftover after the harvest". In other words, make sure you see things as "ours" more than "mine".
2. **LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER** (v11-12)
3. **BE A PERSON OF YOUR WORD** - Sometimes the simplest things are the easiest to overlook.
4. **BE FAIR** (v13)
5. **SHOW COMPASSION TO THE SPECIAL NEEDS COMMUNITY** (v14) - To "curse" means "to make light of". Don't overlook the needs of others that have unique needs.
6. **BE IMPARTIAL** (v15) - Do not let money (either abundance or lack of) persuade how you treat someone. Love each person where they are.
7. **SPEAK BLESSING AND LIFE OVER YOUR NEIGHBORS - ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE NOT AROUND** (v16) - Remember, the power of life or death is in the tongue.
8. **CHOOSE LOVE OVER HATE** (v17-18) - Help people get down their path of life a little farther.

The phrase "I AM THE LORD" is a theme in this passage. It reminds the Israelites of His love and character as He guides them in how to live. Remember, we are not called to be "nice Christians". Instead, we must remember that showing God's love to your neighbor is sacrificial! We see this sacrifice in the cross.

**Stay** - long enough to know their name.

**Pray** - for them daily.

**Play** - with them by being party people. Enjoy having them in your home.

**Say** - life-giving words to them by sharing the Gospel at some point.

### **To Discuss Today**

1. What does it mean that "love is a choice"? Connect this to God's love for His creation.

2. When have you had an opportunity to practice one of the 8 points listed above? What was the outcome?

3. What does it mean that we are not called to be "nice" as Christ-followers? What is the difference between "nice" and "sacrificial"?

Holy Father, thank you for your sacrifice through your Son, Jesus. Help me to choose to love my neighbors and to be a sacrificial Christian in my neighborhood. Help me see needs that I can meet, and help me follow through with meeting those needs. I confess that many times it is easier to just "mind my own business", but help me to get past that selfishness and be salt and light.

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Blessings,  
Pastor Patrick

Carmel is committed to making disciples of those Nearest, our Neighbors and the Nations.

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